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Soviet Ethnic Problems and American National Interests

W. D. Henry

We accepted each other against our inclination;
fear made them court us in war, and us them in
peace; sympathy, the ordinary basis of confidence,
had its place supplied by terror, fear having more
share than friendship in detaining us in the
alliance...

-Thucydides

Free institutions are next to impossible in a
country made up of different nationalities.

-J. S. Mill

Of freedom and life he only is deserving
Who every day must conquer them anew.

-Goethe

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In Uzbekistan there is a legend that one day Tamerlane will return to free the land around his ancient capital of Samarkend from the heavy hand of its oppressor. It is said he will ride down from the hills with his angry horde sweeping all before him. He will once again make a mountain of his enemies' skulls and will rule his people wisely as in the halcyon past.

The legend is significant for several reasons. It is part of an oral tradition which helps to maintain Uzbek identity. It offers the prospect of future revenge to a people who see themselves as severely put upon by the Russians as well as other neighboring ethnic populations. But perhaps most telling, it conveniently ignores the fact that Tamerlane was a greedy and brutal despot who squeezed the land and its people of all they had. He called himself, "the scourge of God and the Lord of all the earth." Nevertheless, as the Russians say today of another hard man, Stalin, "He made the trains run on time."

This story and others like it remind us that the peoples who comprise the many nationalities of the Soviet Union do not view the world with Western eyes. Most have not felt the influence of the Renaissance or the Reformation. Most have only an imperfect concept of democracy and almost none of an individual's rights vis-a-vis those of the society in which he lives. Each of the various ethnic groups in the Soviet Empire is vastly different from the others in language, experience and outlook. Whatever national identity and sense of loyalty a people may possess is tied to tribe and ethnicity rather than

to an overarching state. They see their history and their future through lenses which have profound implications for the present. And they see each other not as confederates in the larger context of the Soviet Union, but as a group of strangers who find themselves locked together in an uncomfortable room.

As old realities crumble across the Soviet Union, these "strangers in the room" are beginning to see new opportunities and new dangers from the Soviet government and from each other. Deep within the Soviet Union, far from the intruding gaze of Western news cameras, a very old drama is about to enter a new act. All along the borders of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic, or Russia, Soviet troops are growing increasingly uneasy about activities in neighboring republics. As change loosens the grip of authority in the Soviet Union, ethnic and national animosities rooted in centuries of enmity will not be denied. The new rules of interaction have not yet been defined and must be discovered by trial and error as well as by force and violence as has been seen in recent "test cases". No one group knows the full measure of another's resolve or even the true will of its own people.

Such a rich and explosive admixture could play out along any of several lines. The purpose of this paper is to analyze some of the forces at work and look at some of the possibilities for the future. It also analyzes U.S. interests and possible objectives for U.S. foreign policy. Finally, it attempts to match those objectives with suitable tools of statecraft.

As is true with most subjects, a brief look at the history upon which the present is built will help us understand the dynamics involved. And the history of that part of the world which is now the Soviet Union is complex indeed. Its geography ensured that it would be so.

The vast plains west of the Urals seemed almost predestined to be a cradle of conflict. They were too large for any one group to dominate and they offered few natural boundaries to serve as convenient borders. But the demographic sweep of widely differing peoples, each bent on possessing the land for itself, ensured the most brutal sort of social Darwinism would be played out on these plains and steppes.

This world was effectively empty prior to Alexander's conquests in the third century BC and his efforts only affected central Asia. This situation remained relatively stable in the north and west until about 600 AD. By that time, the south, being more accessible, was already being swept regularly by Huns, Avars, Vandals and a variety of other tribes not known for their social graces.

From this point until about 1500, the spread of Christianity from the west and the Tartar yoke from the east dominated the region's formation. During this period some of the forces which shaped the current ethnic world of eastern Europe and Russia began to develop. Kievan Russia, with its loose collection of feudal states, submitted to the Khanates and even collaborated with them. After the Huns were

defeated, the lessons of oppression and exploitation were not forgotten. They were perfected and employed by a center of growing strength to keep far-flung rival states divided and weak. Families, ethnic nationalities and tribes were played against one another. This period led to the foundation of Muscovy and its territories from about 1500. It was a state based not on an overarching sense of nationhood, but rather centered on paternalistic despotism. It incorporated the worst aspects of oriental totalitarianism and unreformed European feudalism.

It was in this crucible that the Balts devolved into Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians. Under this rule the Georgians, the Moldavians and the Azerbaijanis were also subjugated; into this admixture the Jews of the diaspora wandered from about 1300 until after 1500. Moreover, the Ukrainians and the White Russians developed identity apart from the Great Russians prior to 1850. Other, smaller groups were subsumed but were not the main players in the west. With Russian expansion into Siberia, the stage was set for the Twentieth Century. (Central Asia developed separately and must be considered recently added and even more undigested than the rest.)

It was not a happy family nor was it intended to be. The ideas expressed in the American Declaration of Independence would have been as alien and even frightening to these people as a visitation from Mars. There was no incentive to assimilate; there was nothing to be gained by trying to form a "melting pot". There was little sense of the highly Western ideas of progress or causality. Enmity between

groups was magnified as a tool of control. Trust was vested only in one's own family, and by extension, one's own tribe or ethnic group. The nation that the individual identified with was not a state in the modern sense, it was an ethnic nation.

From this raw material the Russians constructed their concepts of governance. The players and institutions have changed from the tsars to the Politbureau and the taxonomy of legitimacy has been altered. But the essence has remained the same for a millennium: tight control from a strong center; the rights of individuals subordinated to those of institutions; a preference for security over freedom. This tradition, (and not communism per se), is the immovable object against which the irresistible forces of change are beginning to act. It is within this milieu that the future will be played out.

In spite of basic commonalities, each nationality should be considered separately. Each has its own agenda and each derives its own interpretations from circumstances as the controlling Russian center is perceived to weaken. However, there are 101 recognized nationalities in the Soviet Union speaking over 200 languages and dialects, so it would be impossible to treat them all. Even limiting discussion to those language groups with over one million people, there still are 18. They do not all want the same things nor even do they all agree that the dissolution of Soviet power is a good thing. Only one or two seem to have a well developed sense of their own options or

Moscow's. A few examples will help demonstrate the diversity and the complexity of ethnic problems facing both Soviet policy makers and Western leaders responding to events in the Soviet Union.

In the Baltic states there are eight million people. Of all the Soviet republics, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are seen by the West as having the most legitimate claims among those republics seeking independence. They were absorbed by the Soviet Union in the chaos of World War II against the wishes of their citizens. Their integration has never been recognized by the United States. Estonia and Latvia historically have looked to the West and have had close ties to Germany and Finland. Lithuania once possessed much of what is now Russia and Poland and was a power to be reckoned with. Their populations have retained a fiercely independent spirit that is beginning to find voice in recently permitted political activity.

The Balts would like very much to join in the currently emerging independence of such East European states as Poland, Czechoslovakia and the others. They tend to see themselves as just another group of captive nations rather than as an integral part of the Soviet Union. They also feel the pressure of time. Demography is working against them. Russian immigration into the Baltics is alarming to these nationalities who see their chance for independence being smothered by the influx of ethnic Russians. They also feel the need to make noise while the world's news cameras are focused on the East and before the novelty of freedom's impact is lost in the crush of events.

The Soviets, on the other hand, see the Baltic states as both vital and galling. Vital because of their technological expertise and European work ethic; a large percentage of Soviet engineers are Balts. Galling because many Russians feel they have been subsidizing the relatively high standard of living enjoyed by the Balts at high cost to their own. One Western analyst recently suggested this could be correct, and Russia would be better off without these "parasites" on its economy. He went on to suggest that the Baltic economies could not stand alone or compete with those of Eastern Europe and would inevitably have to turn to the Soviet Union as a natural partner anyway. But perhaps most significantly, the Soviets see Baltic calls for secession as a critical test case; their departure would add impetus to the already increasing pressures for autonomy in the more important Ukraine, Belorussia and other regions.

It seems the external world tends to side with the Soviets on the Baltic issue. Although sympathies run deep, practicalities carry more weight. It is widely believed: (1) there are enough "basket case economies" emerging in the East right now; (2) if the Soviets are to succeed in attempts to metamorphose into something more appealing to the West, they need a measure of stability that is destroyed by premature secessionist challenges; and (3) the precedent of Baltic independence might well precipitate a disastrous ripple effect in republics much more critical to the Soviets.

Perhaps most critical to the continued viability of the USSR is the "bread basket" region: the Ukraine, Belorussia and Moldavia,

(although Moldavia by itself is not as vital). The Ukraine alone has almost fifty-two million people and is riven with its own internecine struggles in addition to those now emerging between the Ukraine and the Soviet Government. The westernmost region of the Ukraine is filled with those who hate Russians. The eastern portion is almost indistinguishable from the Russian republic. Predictably, the middle portion is split. The Chernobyl disaster has served as a unifying influence for anti-Russian feeling and the recent rapprochement between the Soviet leadership and the Ukrainian Catholic Church has opened possibilities for that institution to serve as a catalyst for future Ukrainian nationalism.

Many Belorussians, (out of their ten million total), feel that the Soviet government is guilty of genocide in the way it handled the Chernobyl mess. This enmity is added to a long history of rancorous relations with the Russians.

Moldavia, with only about four million people, is not seen as a major player in nationalistic movements. Nevertheless, its traditionally close ties to Romania, (which originally was carved from Moldavia), may lead to irredentist feelings in the future. Its distance from the Russian republic, and the fact that troops dispatched to quell disturbances would have to cross the Ukraine to get there, might also prompt future Moldavian boldness and opportunism.

The Soviets are not likely to brook much nonsense in these "bread basket" republics. They are seen as not only vital for food production

but also as a buffer between the Russians and the West. What's more, they are considered more ethnically related to the Russians than any other republics. Their numbers and relative fecundity will be needed in the future if the Soviet Union is not to be overbalanced by the swelling numbers of Central Asians and minorities from the Transcaucasus. The Soviet leadership is most likely to use subversion and the heavy hand of the KGB here than in other republics. The Soviets are very worried about the influence of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and will probably move to co-opt it early, thus the gestures toward recognition. It may well be that this "carrot" is visible while the "stick" of suppression has been made visible only to the Church leadership.

The external world does not tend to see the Ukrainians, let alone the Belorussians and the Moldavians, as separate nationalities. These people cannot expect much help from outsiders if they attempt to go their own way. In fact, as already mentioned, such action may be seen as a real danger to the West's interests in Soviet change.

While the "bread basket" republics have many similarities, those of the mountainous Transcaucasus region, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, are marked by their differences. The hatred between the Muslim Azerbaijanis and the Christian Armenians goes far beyond religious differences and has been well documented in the media recently. The Azerbaijanis themselves are also divided on their ultimate national goals, other than killing Armenians. Armenians, on the other hand, may not be particularly happy, but they would like to

stay in the Soviet Union. They look to Moscow to protect them from Azerbaijanis on one side and Turks on the other.

The Georgians have long been known as a clannish and tenacious nation of shrewd businessmen. Since communism has frustrated much of their entrepreneurial spirit, their talents have been channeled into crime. From their ranks come the Soviet Union's answer to the Mafia. Given their relatively comfortable niche and their freer local underground economy, (they eat better than any other republic), one might think they would prefer the status quo over change. Nevertheless, calls for independence have arisen even from this land of Stalin.

Finally, a word about Central Asia. Five republics: Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan comprise this poverty stricken area as large as Europe with its rapidly growing population of over fifty million. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are the most significant of these, but the other three republics border on Iran, Afghanistan and China, a fact which gives them a significance all their own.

Central Asia defies facile classifications and these five republics enfold a vast array of anthropological diversity too easily pigeonholed with other, more numerous ethnic neighbors. However, the following characteristics generally apply: (1) the Central Asians are the Soviet underclass and are openly discriminated against; (2) they are the poorest, the worst educated and the least healthy of the Soviets; (3) their population is the fastest growing in the Soviet

Union and is already at least 30 percent of the total population; (4) most political activism is concentrated in the cities and the countryside is firmly in the grip of local party bosses who serve as local chieftains; (5) the people are Muslim, (although few are fundamentalist or Shia).

In the curious world of popular imagery where myth, TV "sound bites" and commonly held misperceptions merge to form a perceptual reality with a force of its own, Gorbachev has been lionized as a genius and a visionary. In fact, his actions have a long intellectual provenance and, when the state of the Soviet Union is examined objectively, even his most ardent admirers admit he had little choice but to either start a war or institute changes. This harsh reality, however, should take nothing from the man's indomitable personal courage, political acumen and enduring tenacity.

The staggering scope of transformation which will be required to make the Soviet Union viable into the next century is daunting in the extreme, especially to the Soviet people, who are just beginning to realize what will be required. It is not surprising that Gorbachev is more popular in Europe than in his home republic of Russia. He essentially is telling people who prefer security, (however mean), to freedom, with its concomitant responsibilities, that they must suffer for yet another generation and revise their familiar, (if hypocritical), disdain for acting in one's own best interest. To these people who are among the world's most adept at reading the real meaning between the lines of obfuscating phrases, what he is really saying is

that they have been travelling full speed down the wrong road for three generations. To the young, this is a hopeful message; they want to act now. To the old this is frightening and threatens their security and heritage when they need it most. Gorbachev must ride these two waves simultaneously. If he is to keep his balance, there can be only the smallest allowance for unrest among the republics.

No one, least of all Gorbachev, doubts that change will come to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. He acknowledges that eventually some republics will be allowed to go and others will stay in a sort of federation wherein some will be bound more tightly than others. The question is timing. Timing is the key to Gorbachev's success or failure. If change comes too slowly, there is potential for a bloodletting that would make the civil war of 1917-1923 look like a picnic. If change comes too fast, there is a real danger that recidivist elements will gain control. That eventuality may not be able to change the tide already in motion, but it could lead to another series of dangers and disasters all its own.

A large number of analysts feel the Soviets have already telegraphed the worst case "deal" they are willing to live with. It goes like this:

- The Baltics: Leave the Soviet Union and join the Nordic Council as independent states.
- "Bread Basket": Belorussia and the Ukraine remain in the Soviet Union with some local autonomy.
Moldavia...who cares?

- Transcaucasus: Azerbaijan leaves; Georgia goes or stays as it wishes; Armenia would like to stay but will have to go along with Georgia.
- Central Asia: All or part of Kazakhstan will stay; the other four republics will leave the Soviet Union.

There is a compelling logic to this arrangement. The food of Belorussia and the Ukraine would be retained. The oil and large (40%) Russian population of Kazakhstan would be retained. Those whom the Russians call the "black asses" of Central Asia who have been "dragging the Russians down" would be left to their own devices. The problems in the Transcaucasus would go away. The inevitable bloodbaths would be regrettable but no longer a Soviet problem. The fractious Baltics would be released but would remain economically dependent on trade with a leaner Soviet Union, thus bringing in hard currency and probably technology. (There is also speculation that the Soviets will return the disputed islands of the Kuriles to Japan in exchange for technology.)

At first blush the above scenario seems a little draconian. It is not without precedent, however. The treaty of Brest-Litovsk in WWI gave up proportionally greater losses to save Lenin's revolution. The stakes are just as high today. Unlike Americans, the Russians tend to take the long view, (another of their oriental traits). Today's losses may be regained tomorrow, but only if the Soviet Union survives; something it cannot do in its present configuration.

Of course, there are also compelling arguments that the Soviets would not retreat so far in their restructuring or that the final arrangement would be qualitatively different. There is also fear of anarchy along Soviet borders, even if the Soviets themselves are not directly involved. Whatever happens, timing will be a critical factor. Two years ago some of the actions Gorbachev is taking now would have precipitated violent opposition; today they are accepted as inevitable. Yet even at this stage, if events unfold too quickly, the forces at work may get out of control and change collapse into anarchy. And again, if things move too slowly, those becoming more frustrated and impatient will be compelled to act in an untoward manner. Gorbachev must placate both groups simultaneously. The push for change, with its ever more strident calls for tangible results, must be reconciled with those still powerful groups who grow more certain each day that Gorbachev is selling out their birthright and sending their nation into chaos. Gorbachev may be able to keep his balance but only by showing the kind of results which will please both sides. Ironically, it is the lack of faith by both sides that has the greatest capacity to prevent such results.

Generically, there are four scenarios which encompass possible future events in the Soviet Union as the ethnic dramas are played out. They are:

- (1) No civil war, relative balance.
- (2) Limited civil war.
- (3) Widespread civil war.

(4) Recidivism.

In the first scenario, no civil war, strife would be localized and protest would be put down through a combination of measured covert and overt force as well as selective intimidation. (Such a scenario has recently been playing out in Lithuania.) Promises of economic sticks and carrots would prove useful in certain areas. More local autonomy would be offered within a federal framework, but most of the Soviet Union would remain intact. Each republic would be approached on a bilateral basis rather than in a forum in which Russian interests could be "outvoted". This basically is the modus operandi today.

In the second scenario, limited civil war, most problems would be handled as in the "no civil war" case, but matters would get out of hand in one or more republics of the same region. This scenario is likely to result in sharp and bloody conflict. If it occurs in the European region, it would be less protracted than in Central Asia where any conflict is more likely to devolve into guerrilla warfare. Although a certain international opprobrium would accrue to the Soviets for fighting such a war, little action of any substance would be taken against them. Excuses would be made in the hope of future progress under Perestroika.

In the third scenario, widespread civil war, some problems could be handled as in the "no civil war" case, but open fighting would erupt in republics of two or more regions. This scenario would be the most dangerous for the world outside the Soviet Union in the short term and

its outcome the least predictable. The Soviets would be extremely sensitive to outside forces trying to take advantage of their problems and the potential for misinterpretation of international signaling might never be greater. As with a wounded animal, even offers of help might result in irrational responses, and the Soviet Union is a nuclear animal.

In the last scenario, recidivism, Gorbachev would be replaced by a more conservative leadership. Although not all internal changes could be reversed and little could be done to change the course of most of Eastern Europe, such a government could do much to stifle dissent within the Soviet Union. It is not too cynical to suggest that the world would want to believe the best of such a government and would therefore readily accept any pronouncements, however vapid, to the effect that the new administration intended to follow Gorbachev's lead, only at a reduced pace. Such propaganda would buy them the time they would need to consolidate power and regain much lost control and perhaps territory. This scenario is probably the most dangerous in the long run because such a government would not be capable of curing the Soviet Union's deadly ills and would inevitably seek more adventurous means of remaining in power if not legitimate.

Before turning to proposed American courses of action, it will be helpful to examine overall U.S. interests regarding the Soviet Union. The overarching American goal for the Soviet Union is for it to evolve toward a more pluralistic, democratic polity and an internationally open, market economy. Even if, as some have suggested, it is true that

the Soviet Union is trying to restructure only to better devour the West, these elemental changes would necessarily cause the USSR to metamorphose into something fundamentally less threatening to American survival interests. In the best case, such changes would allow the Soviet Union to evolve into a fully contributing partner in positive world growth.

A major American interest aimed at achieving the above goal is political-military stability; (1) within the USSR; (2) in Soviet-American relations; and, (3) between the Soviet Union and her neighbors. Positive Soviet restructuring will be difficult under the best of circumstances. It will be impossible without a measure of stability, especially within the Soviet Union. This does not mean things must always go Gorbachev's way or that the West must accede to his every initiative. But it does mean that the West should acknowledge he can fight only so many fires simultaneously. It also means the West needs to understand he must show some measure of progress to both the general Soviet population and his critics within the power structure. The West cannot manage the Soviet Union's decline, but it can manage its own response to that decline.

Another such interest is for the Soviet Union to establish economic ties with the West on the basis of fairly competing market capitalism. This does not mean that the Soviet Union must be asked to sell a generation of its young to the West to pay for its impoverished starting position, nor does it mean that the West will have to carry the USSR indefinitely. But it does mean that the Soviets will have to

face up to some unpleasant realities on their way to becoming full partners in the world economy. Perhaps the first of these will be the impact on the Soviet economy of making the ruble an international currency. Gorbachev will face a stern test indeed as his citizenry tries to adjust to market forces in housing, food and fuel prices after convertability.

A third American interest, at least in the short term, is for Gorbachev to show some improvement in quality of life to the general Soviet population and some hope of improved national viability to the Soviet military and conservative power elites. This translates into opportunities for Western trade and investment in general and U.S. business in particular. This doesn't mean the West must allow the KGB to steal sensitive technology, nor does it mean the U.S. must force panty hose on the Russians instead of grain. It does mean that reasonable incentives should be created for Western business to make highly visible and successful inroads into the Soviet economy while giving Gorbachev a bone to throw to his critics. Ideally, these inroads should also be irreversible and should ensure a large and profitable role for American business.

A fourth American interest concerns the future of any nationalities which separate from the Soviet Union by one means or another. It may or may not be in the interest of overall regional stability for these new nations to align themselves with the U.S. directly. In any case, however, they should not align themselves with interests either inimical to our own or with those threatening to the

newly emerging and more vulnerable Soviet Union. (This could be a particularly difficult problem if certain countries in Eastern Europe realign in a way which exacerbates the worst influences of Soviet nationalities realignment. For example, if Poland, Czechoslovakia and Lithuania were to reach condominium too soon, it could destabilize the entire region.)

A final American interest is the preservation of human life and ethnic cultural values to the extent feasible. Admittedly, this is a subordinate goal, but American interests have always proceeded from a legitimizing claim on respect for human values. It will be particularly difficult to resolve these interests with longer range national interests in the case of the civil war scenarios. To a large degree, the U.S. has already reached a working accommodation of conscience regarding these matters in all cases short of civil war. It has sprung easily from the tenants of REALPOLITIK during the cold war.

To support these interests, it will be necessary for the U.S. to achieve a balanced mix of military, political and economic objectives. Perhaps even more daunting will be achieving such a mix while trying to keep a sense of reality in the American public's eye. There will be a growing perception that the Soviet Union is no longer a threat but is now "just another democracy". Indeed, the irrepressible American "Epcot Center" world view has already begun to generate a new paradigm along this line for the popular culture. Where it leads, can public opinion be far behind?

Of the three types of objectives and influence, (military, political and economic), the military will have to play the most indirect role. In addition to maintaining a strategic deterrent and remaining the instrument of containment until the nature of the new security environment becomes clear, the military will also need to "hold down the edges" of the ethnic problem. This does not mean U.S. forces should threaten to enter any fray that develops within the Soviet Union. Rather, U.S. forces and those of NATO should continue gently to remind Moscow that there are borders, (if not moral limits), beyond which Soviet internal problems must not stray. In support of these goals, American forces may need to be very flexible and might even have to yield some traditional prerogatives to allies in order to keep NATO a viable political entity into the next century. Those forces will have to remain prepared for a wide range of contingency operations without appearing to threaten the Soviets, especially in times of rising ethnic tensions. The military will have to give Moscow room to maneuver politically without giving ground literally. As U.S. troops are withdrawn from Europe, a reshaped US naval presence will need to be instituted to help make this possible.

In the worst case scenarios such as widespread civil war or the advent of a madman with nuclear weapons, it even may be necessary to deploy a "strategic covert action" team capable of a broad range of desperate actions. While using such a team would be unthinkable under conditions of relative stability, it could provide valuable leverage to prevent escalation in a rapidly degenerating crisis. Without referring to specifics however, it is obvious that the military will have to be

proactive and creative in responding to any such unprecedented situations as they emerge.

START talks should be kept separate from the above issues with no linkage whatsoever to ethnic questions. Doing so will add to a Soviet sense of security and will not offer short sighted legislators an opportunity to grab immediate financial gains at the expense of long term American security.

Politically, NATO will prove very useful in keeping Europe focused as the Soviet Union evolves and, most likely, changes shape. It will not always produce consensus, but it will be a valuable balance to the weight of the European Community government in Brussels. At times, NATO may be the only venue for American interests and overarching European security concerns to be aired, free from the more parochial concerns of Brussels or individual European governments.

In Asia, America must stay very close to Japan, especially in the areas of defense and technology. Trade difficulties must be worked out now before Japan's financial position and political frustration make her more amenable to Soviet overtures. If the Soviets give back the Kuriles in exchange for trade and technology, the U.S. would do well to try to channel the agreements into Siberian resource development and away from dual use technology. Indeed, it may want to join with Japan in joint development ventures. This may not be possible if America is at odds with the Japanese.

China also figures largely in both Soviet and Japanese considerations. Although a detailed treatment of possible Chinese influences is beyond the scope of this paper, the potential impact of Soviet and Japanese perceptions of China should not be forgotten by the Americans.

As important as the above military objectives are, with the exception of arms control and confidence building measures, they must be seen as secondary to economic objectives. Economics is at the heart of Soviet problems and Soviet hopes. It is in this arena that success or failure will be principally determined. Happily, it is in this arena that America holds the most applicable and useful set of statecraft tools. While the U.S. can and should do little by way of giving direct financial aid to the Soviet Union, there is much to be gained through carefully crafted trade and investment agreements. The technology, expertise and financial arrangements necessary for Soviet progress can all be offered, but at a price. The price must be access above all else. Access to Soviet markets, resources and, most importantly, Soviet people. With unfettered access to the Soviet populous, the full force of Western ideas can begin the lengthy and laborious process of insinuating themselves into the fabric of a new generation. Only then will the process be truly irreversible and the future guaranteed. As with other countries in the past, economic self interest will prove to be the engine of more profound changes in the Soviet subconscious.

The difficulty will be to introduce economic self-interest and optimism into the Soviet Union without completely loosening the bonds of fear and greed. Although that job will fall primarily to Soviet leadership, they are singularly ill equipped to deal with it. They will also be interested in executing their strategic retreat gracefully and with as much pride intact as possible. The West will have to exercise a modicum of restraint and vision rather than the customary game of "beggar thy neighbor". This will become especially delicate as Western allies jockey for advantageous position in trade and lease options. It is to be hoped the results will look like a team of surgeons at work rather than a flock of vultures. Nevertheless, the Soviets know full well that this is not a zero-sum game. It is in everyone's interest to reduce military strains in Europe, gain cultural and economic access for both sides and to reduce military expenditures.

Most of the above objectives are fairly straightforward, but their success will depend in large measure on Soviet perceptions of the external world and its intentions. Given their history of well justified paranoia, it is highly likely that the Soviet leadership and much of the population will see mortal dangers in the very initiatives they need most to accept. There is a real possibility that these "foreign" innovations will serve only as a rallying point for the Luddites and be rejected much as a body rejects a transplanted organ. To prevent this, perception management tools, such as black, white and gray propaganda, might prove useful in a few isolated cases. But Americans have never been very effective at such a game, and the

dangers of appearing disingenuous at a time when trust is vital probably would outweigh potential gains.

All these objectives can be worked simultaneously and at several levels. What's more, none are expensive or require inflexible commitments at an early stage. They can be laid out in a fairly open set of policy statements and modified as matters progress. It also will be helpful to strengthen "back channel" dialogues with the allies and especially with the Soviet leadership. Doing so will go far to prevent misinterpretation of diplomatic signals and to head off the inevitable misunderstandings between peoples with such a gulf between them.

Perhaps just as importantly, most of these objectives pass the "What if I'm wrong?" test. That is, if they fail, they fail soft. There would be little irreversible damage and they give all players time to think. Finally, they are all better than doing nothing. Besides, doing nothing is not an option. Even if the U.S. were to try to do nothing, the adventures of allies and the paranoia of the Soviets would conspire to ascribe motives to reticence. That does not mean the American leadership cannot be deliberate and wait for the dust to settle from time to time. It does mean, however, that they must do something whether they like it or not.

The West must make no mistake about the fact that there is a very real revolution underway in the East. And, as Crane Brinton pointed out in his classic analysis of revolutions, the real danger of

instability and bloodshed comes not when things are worst, but after they have begun to improve; after those who have been oppressed grow impatient and the old ruling class begins to lose faith in itself. It is then that the West will face the real danger of a nuclear armed power in chaos. The situation is not hopeless, but there are three roads to the abyss for every route to the bridge, and the journey is well underway. There is no going back. And it is a journey the Soviets cannot make alone.

While writing about another, far more ancient culture, Edward Gibbon eloquently captured the heart of the ethnic Russians', (if not the Soviets'), dilemma:

"In the end, the Athenians wanted security more than freedom; and the freedom they wanted was freedom from responsibility. It was then that they ceased to be free."

The glacial process of trying to change this "Athenian" mindset should be the real center of gravity for America's efforts. It is ironic that the U.S. should be faced with trying to alter such a mindset for the Russians at a time when America seems to be adopting it as its own in so many areas of culture. As is so often the case in personal relations, maybe America will find its own salvation in trying to save another.

It has been said that Americans have won the war and lost the peace twice in this century. Now they have been given an unprecedented third chance to make good. To do so their leaders will need more than luck and a philosophy of muddling through. This time they will need a

vision of the future; of what victory should look like. The most enlightened among them already know that just as total war can no longer have a winner, total victory must no longer have a loser.

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